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FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9775
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS RIYADH 000040

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND EEB
STATE PASS TO USTR FOR JASON BUNTIN
USDOC FOR TYLER HOFFMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [KIPR](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: MINISTRY OF CULTURE CONTINUES TO MOVE ON IPR
VIOLATORS

REF: A. RIYADH 08 1435
[1](#)B. RIYADH 08 1807

[1](#)1. (SBU) On Wednesday, January 7, the English-language newspaper Saudi Gazette reported that the Ministry of Culture and Information had closed a cafe in Riyadh's al-Dhabab district for accessing coded satellite television channels without possessing a commercial subscription.

[1](#)2. (SBU) In a telcon the same day, MOCI Director General for Copyrights Obaidallah al-Obaidallah confirmed to econoff that not only was that cafe closed down, the Saudi government was closing down two other cafes in Riyadh for IPR infringement. Obaidallah said additional cafes in Jeddah and Dammam were under investigation. In all three cases, the Arab Radio and Television Association (ART) filed claims against the cafes with MOCI, whose investigative arm then ordered the closure. Obaidallah said he expected all cases to be settled directly between the business owners and the ART, who has already dropped the charges against one cafe after its owner paid for a full subscription.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: The MOCI is putting additional muscle behind its IPR enforcement vision. Closing businesses subsequent to allegations of satellite TV piracy is a new step in an IPR enforcement campaign that, in recent months, has increased the number and intensity of investigations of shops and warehouses producing pirated media. In August, the MOCI sent letters to the owners of residential compounds advising them to ensure their satellite TV signals were legally licensed (ref A). MOCI also continues to promote a deterrent effect on IPR violations by publicizing the results of these raids; articles such as those appearing in the Saudi Gazette are a tangible result of this that is relatively new but becoming more frequent. Post will continue to engage with SAG entities to encourage further progress on IPR enforcement. End comment.

FRAKER